# HN1400 – OHS

# Chapter 1 – Introduction

# Chapter Objectives

**After reading this chapter, you will be able to do the following:**

1. Define occupational health and safety, occupational injury, and occupational illness.
2. Describe the financial and social costs associated with occupational injuries and illnesses.
3. Trace the development of modern models of health and safety management.
4. List and describe the role of the major stakeholders in occupational health and safety.
5. Explain the connection between human resource management and occupational health and safety
6. Describe the links between the human resource practices and health and safety.

# Chapter Summary

Chapter 1 outlines the economic, legal, and social importance of the management of occupational health and safety (OH&S) in organizations, and illustrates how OH&S is an integral part of human resource management (HRM) and organizational strategy. This chapter begins with a discussion on the historical development of modern OH&S and the changing perspectives on risk and liability. The chapter concludes by discussing the roles and responsibilities of the major OH&S stakeholders and the importance of building cooperation, as well as a shared responsibility among multiple stakeholders to ensure workplace OH&S.

**THE THREE E’s**

A traditional HRM approach to OH&S that emphasizes:

**E**ngineering solutions to ensure safe work environments, equipment and personal protective devices

**E**ducating supervisors and employers in the use of the equipment

**E**nforcing existing regulations and practices

**IMPORTANCE of OHS**

* Economic considerations
* Legal considerations
* Moral Considerations

**KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

* Government
* Employers
* Employees
* Organized Labour
* Partnerships
* Health and Safety Officials

OH&S is almost exclusively managed under the Human Resources function. There are several reasons for this organizational structure. A more current approach to OH&S is focusing on health and safety as it:

* Is a People Issue
* Requires Legislative Compliance
* Relates to Other Human Resource Functions
* Decreases Costs
* Is about Building a Strong H&S Culture
* Is part of the Business Plan
* Is about Change Management

SHORT HISTORY OF OHS LEGISLATION

In 1889, the Royal Commission on the Relations of Capital and Labour in Canada made several recommendations about improving OH&S including:

* Established standards and mandated regular inspections
* Recommended a system for compensating victims of industrial accidents, regardless of fault
* Recommended that a labour bureau be created to oversee these activities

In 1974, the Royal Commission on the Health and Safety of Workers in Mines, formed by the Ontario government, was the first to articulate the three principal rights of workers that continue to be enshrined in current legislation and provide the basis for much of the H&S programming in Canada.

* The right to refuse dangerous work without penalty
* The right to participate in identifying and correct OH&S problems
* The right to know about hazards in the workplace

In 1988, legislation was passed that established the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS).

In 1994, the Ontario Workmen’s Compensation Act (first province) provided lost time wages to injured workers.

Following World War I, federal and provincial governments began to enact legislation to protect the worker from accidents and illnesses that included compensation, employer liability, and workplace practices.

In 2003, Bill C-45, (also called the Westray Bill- the Act to amend the Criminal Code) established a duty in criminal law (criminal liability of organizations) to protect the health and safety of everyone in the workplace. (Refer to the text OH&S Today 1.3: A Predictable Path to Disaster at Westray). CBC has a video on the Westray Disaster.

As a result of continued improvement to workplace legislation, the number of workplace accidents continues to decline.